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International Court of Justice

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Take 4 - P 8
Noll
26 June 1946
Westernacher

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFNESE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED ~~#~~ 13 MARCH 1946.

1700 6

26 June 1946

H0986 – 0002

COMMISSIONER:

MR. George R. Taylor

CORPS OF POLITICAL LEADERS

(The Commission reconvened at 1635 hours.)

ERNA WESTERNACHER, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY MR. TAYLOR:

Q. Will you state your full name?

A. Frau Erna Westernacher

Q. Will you raise your right hand, and repeat after me?

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the whole truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeats the oath.)

BY DR. LINK:

Q. The witness, Westernacher, was active in the National Socialist Frauenschaft on the different levels--ortsgruppe, kreis, gau--in a leading position. Since the leaders of the National Socialist women's organizations are noted on the margin as belonging to the National Socialist Fuehrer Corps, I want to hear the witness on whether or not the women's organizations had any connection with the National Socialist leiter corps, and particularly with that of the political leiters.

Q. When did you join the NSDAP and the National Socialist Frauenschaft, and why?

A. I joined the woman's organization in the fall of 1931. Since I was the mother of several children, I felt that I had to work in order to aid in the general misery, and because I liked the community which came to all alike no matter what their profession, their origin, or their social position. The

H0986 - 0003

The former organizations ~~xxxx~~ had been unsuccessful because they only appealed to certain layers of society. We started working far from any political arguments; we only turned to the women, and it gave us the opportunity to talk to all women.

~~X~~ Q. What is your profession?

A. I am a housewife, and my husband was a higher civil servant.

Q. What was your position in the NSF?

A. I was the chief of the office of the local women's organization in Barfelden/Odenwald from 1931 to 1936. Beginning in 1932, I simultaneously became the ~~kx~~ leiterin of the kreis office in Erbach/Odenwald, until 1935. Beginning in 1935, I became the Frauenschaft leiterin in Frankfurt on Main.

Q. You ~~xx~~ were active on all the levels of the Frauenschaft--ort, kreis, and gau?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Can you state that you are in a position to say that you had enough contact with other offices to be able to say that the same ~~xx~~ picture prevailed there?

~~Q~~ A. I ~~xx~~ participated in many conferences; we all received the same directives. I frequently had ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ contact with other gaus and kreis, and therefore assume that I am in a position to answer these questions.

Q. In what form was the Frauenschaft established?

A. As a Party organization.

Q. Does that mean that your organization was independent?

A. Yes.

Q. Despite that, weren't there any connections with the Party organization?

A. The only connection which existed was that ~~xxxxxxx~~ we had to advise the hoheitstraeger on the ort, kreis, and gau ~~xxx~~ level in matters pertaining to women. To attach the NSF in the form of an amt to any Party ~~xx~~ structure was

H0986 - 0004

basically impossible because, in the Third Reich, women were to be kept away from politics. I have stated before that we wished to remain away from politics.

Q. I shall return to that last point. I wish to submit to you the Organization Book of the Party--the Seventh Edition, 1943. It is one of the basic documents submitted by the Prosecution. I want to show you that there are diagrams showing the staff of the gauleiter and the staff of the kreisleiter. May I further point out to you--this is the staff of th e gauleiter, and this is the staff of the kreisleiter, and there are little boxes in this diagram showing the NSF. I want to call your attention to the fact that it does not coincide with your statement that there is no organizationsl connection with the staff of the kreisleiter.

A. It confirms my former statement, for the other offices--even those of the professional experts--are indicated in the form of amts. Only the studentenbund and dozenten bund, which was established almost simultaneously with ours, is not shown in that way. I am pointing out the lines here.

Q. Did you know this Organization Book?

A. I did not know this Organization Book, but I have perused similar books. It is a book which we did not like in our work.

Q. You say that, while all the other political and professional offices are connected by a straight line, your organization and that of the students are indicated by a broken line. According to you, this means that both of these organizations were Gliederungen, and had no organizational connections with the staff of the gauleiter and the kreisleiter. What sort of contacts did you have in the course of your duties with the gauleiter or kreisleiter?

A. I attended conferences with the gauleiter, which he held at certain intervals with his chiefs of professional offices, with the leaders of the Gliederungen--and there were some of us there, too.

Q. What was discussed there?

H0986-0005

A. General questions pertaining to the gau.

Q. What was your ~~xx~~ contact with the gauleiter outside of these conferences? That is to say, those meetings which ~~xx~~ the other witnesses described as enlarged meetings.

A. I will take it on my oath that, during the ten years of my activity as Gaufrauenschaftsleiterin, I was in the office of the Gauleiter on ~~xxxx~~ duty only five times.

Q. What directives did you receive in your position?

A. Only the pertinent directives from the Reichsfrauenschaftfuehrung.

Q. And the Gauleiter was not in position to give you supplementary directives?

A. The Gauleiter was happy if he did not have anything to do with us women.

Q. The NSF had offices with all sorts of departments. Were these women who were in the ~~xxxxxxx~~ different offices of the NSF in any way in touch with the hoheitstraeger?

A. No. They ~~x~~ received their pertinent directives from myself or from other leaders of the Frauenschaft.

Q. You will agree with me when I state that the only connection between the NSF and the hoheitstraeger consisted of the fact that the leaders of the NSF offices were available to the competent hoheitstraegers as expert advisors in matters pertaining to women--without the hoheitstraeger having any right to issue directives, leaving out, of course, the disciplinary connection which was a fact pertaining to every Party member.

A. Yes, that is the way it was.

Q. I shall ask you, nevertheless, what did the NSF have to do with the struggle against the church and the persecution of the Jews?

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H0986 - 0006

A. I fear that belongs in politics, with which I have stated before, we had nothing in common. We never received any directives regarding those things. Aside from the members of the NSF, a great many of the leaders were members of the Protestant and Catholic churches--without any difficulty emanating from this fact.

Q. Do you know of any single case in which the fact that a leader was a member of the Church, or even active therein, had any disadvantages from it, or even was politically persecuted because of it?

A. I do not know anyone who was persecuted for that reason.

Q. Did you receive directives, or did you ever hear anything about pilots who had made emergency landings being mistreated?

A. No, there were no such directives of any sort. I only know that pilots who landed had to be brought speedily to Oberursel. The German women had to get off the streetcar if there was no motor vehicle available.

It was for the protection of the fliers, so that they could get quickly to their camp which was at Oberursel.

Q. How about treatment of foreign workers and prisoners of war?

A. Per se, we had nothing to do with it. I know from the reports of my co-workers and my section chiefs that German women complained that German women and children were poorly dressed, whereas Ukrainian women and foreign women were well taken care of. I know that is true, because I made collections of clothing and linen in order to dress foreign workers.

Q. Do you agree with me when I say that the leaders of the NSF cannot be considered Political Leaders in the sense of the charges with which you have been made acquainted?

A. As far as I am concerned, it is practically grotesque. We never felt like political leaders, and I believe that the Party would have considered us

H0986 - 0007

megalomaniacs if we had considered ourselves political leaders.

(The Commission adjourned at 1700 hours.)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of ERNA WESTERNACHER taken of 26 June 1946.

D. Noll
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

Geo. Taylor
Commissioner

H0986 - 0008

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H0986-0009

Q What is your profession?

A I am a housewife and my husband was a higher civil servant.

Q What was your position in the NSF?

A I was the chief of the office of the local women's organization in Barfelden/Odenwald from 1931 t. 1936. Beginning in 1932, I sumultaneously became the teiter in the Kreis office in Erbach/Odenwald, until 1935. Beginning in 1935, I became the Frauenschaft leiterin in Frankfurt on Main.

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A Yes.

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A The only connection which existed was that we had to advise the hoheitstraeger on the ort, kreis, and gau level in matters pertaining to women. To attach the NSF in the form of an amt to any Party structure was basically impossible because, in theThird Reich, women were to be kept away from politics. I have stated before that we wished toremain away from politics.

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H0986-0010

H0986-0011

Q The NSF had offices with all sorts of departments. Were these women who were in the different offices of the NSF in any way in touch with the hoheitstraeger?

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H0986 - 0012

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